

At last, Depot Allocation that pays...

Omnibus has announced the release and successful implementation of an all-new payroll interface for their Depot Allocation System.

In employing a solution such as Depot Allocation, with real-time management of crews and vehicles, users expect the data to be of use in all key aspects of operations. When the data affects the calculation of pay, its accuracy and integrity cannot afford to be in question. In achieving a new payroll interface, Omnibus analysed and worked with some of the most complex UK labour agreements in use to produce a solution that will accommodate the many variations of rules for payroll calculations.

"When Omnibus purchased the Depot Allocation System from Excel we looked closely at its payroll interfacing and spoke to clients about what they wanted", says Peter Crichton, Omnibus MD. "We concluded that a major overhaul was required, and this launch is the culmination of that – together with an impressive effort from the Omnibus development team"

DAS 'Payrules', as it is known, was rigorously tested for accuracy and integrity before its first

implementation, at Trent Barton Buses. "We use the Payroll interface to gather together all the work done by the drivers the previous week, calculating any rules that we need such as guarantees and deducting meal breaks. It also gathers together holiday information and allows us to report on any makeup that has been paid." Comments Mark Greasley, IT Manager for Trent Barton.

"It is a lot easier to use than the timesheets calculator we had used, and all our reports are generated when we calculate each week rather than having to use an access link to gather and report on the data.

It is also a lot quicker at running and generating the data than the old system. However, I think the biggest difference is the support from Omnibus, as they have been a great help in setting this module up and making the system very flexible."

Peter concluded, "This is an important step forward for the Omnibus Depot Allocation



System. We hear stories of payroll interfaces sitting unused, a problem which is said to be down to either inaccuracy or being too inflexible to accommodate all the parameters required. In completely rewriting this part of DAS, we took all these things into account in order to create something that users can set up and rely on to produce the correct results.

"We are already seeing consistently accurate results, both from testing and also the initial roll out of implementation. This must be the ultimate goal for any payroll interface".

Refreshing News

Over the last six months, Omnibus have been reviewing our marketing resources, and updating key literature relating to our products and presentation of information.

The next stage, already well underway, is a review and overhaul of the Omnibus website. Omnibus are keen to provide both prospects and customers with resources that will increase awareness of the organisation, its products and service.

The website will provide a hub for easy access to information and communication with Omnibus.

NaPTAN Editor Under the Spotlight

Having a national database of information about bus stop locations, such as NaPTAN, is a useful way of introducing countrywide standards and facilities. However, Local Authorities and Operators who manage bus stop information do find that data held can be inaccurate or requires updating.

The NaPTAN v2 Editor allows users to maintain the NaPTAN StopPoint and StopArea records for any local authority area. Built to support all the features of the NaPTAN version 2 XML schema, the editor is easy to use and validates changes against defined rules as it is edited.

For those moving from managing stop information in Excel spreadsheets, NaPTAN v2 data can be much more complicated than using single tables. The Omnibus editor provides a focused custom editor, which can import and export data entirely through XML formats. In addition, fast import of existing NaPTAN and NPTG data will get you up and running quickly.

Operating as either a stand alone editor, or integrated with OmniFLAG, the NaPTAN Editor also creates an integrated database for use with OmniTIMES, OmniSTOP and OmniEXPORT.

Llandudno Shines...

The ATCO conference held in Llandudno in early June was a great opportunity to meet both existing local authority clients and their colleagues from other authorities.

Over the two days, we discussed, demonstrated and even issued products. It was also a useful time to meet up with software suppliers with whom Omnibus currently, or may in the future, interface with.

Innovations Looms

So, with the ATCO conference finished, we now look forward to the next scheduled UK exhibition, Transport Innovations. Come and visit us in Birmingham on October 10th - 11th. We are on stand T220 (you can't miss us - we're by the entrance). The standard tub of chocolates will be there too!



Visit: www.transportinnovations.com

CALLING ALL SCHEDULERS

Although not run by Omnibus, we would like to draw to the attention of those involved in transport scheduling to an online forum for discussing all things scheduling.

With a membership of schedulers from across the UK and North America the forum enables members to discuss issues and problems with colleagues around the world in an informal and non commercial setting. Recent topics have included effective ways of scheduling night work with day work and an interesting debate on the different ways of rostering staff in the US as opposed to the UK.

The group is open to anyone involved in the scheduling of passenger transport around the world. More details can be found at: <http://finance.groups.yahoo.com/group/schedulers/>

C a s e S t u d y

G O W E S T M I D L A N D S

Established in the mid eighties as the Birmingham Coach Company, Go West Midlands has grown to be one of the largest bus companies in the area, running in excess of 200 vehicles under the 'Diamond' brand. This growth has kept pace since its acquisition by the national operator, Go-Ahead Group.

"Go Ahead Group acquired two established West Midlands bus operators, Birmingham Coach Company in December 2005 and Peoples Express in March 2006" says Operations Director, Nigel Eggleton. "These were merged to form the new Go West Midlands business, and there was an urgent need to improve IT based planning, scheduling and management reports."

As a result, in the first quarter of 2007, Go West Midlands purchased OmniTIMES, OmniBASE, CrewPLAN and OmniROTA.

"I had personal experience of Omnibus software elsewhere in Go Ahead Group and knew it was a tried and tested solution that would fit in well" said Nigel.

OmniTIMES has been used to rework, develop and optimise timetables, updating them from the previous systems and combining them into a consistent database. This information was then run through OmniBASE to schedule the workload, and CrewPLAN to create effective duties. Finally, OmniROTA completes the workings to piece the schedule and driver duties together.

"We have already produced a number of timetables, schedules and rotas far more quickly than would have been possible using the previous system."

Go West Midlands supplemented the installation and training of the software with Omnibus Consultancy Services: "Following the initial installation of the Omnibus software, there was an urgent need to produce schedules and rotas for service changes that were immediately required. We asked Omnibus to assist us with this process, enabling us to meet tight deadlines whilst taking some of the pressure off our own staff at what was a very busy time."

For Omnibus, this represented continued growth into the Go Ahead Group. By being able to complete the installation and consultancy to a tight timescale, Go West Midlands were able to reap the benefits immediately. Nigel concludes, "In the future it will enable us to respond more quickly to changes, adapting our services to meet customer demand. And coupled to this, we have improved statistical analysis and the ability to provide data for other systems."



PLANNING WITH OMNIBUS

The last few months have been busy for Omnibus Consultancy Services, who provide scheduling and planning expertise to both users and non users alike.

Asking us to help with these types of exercises can be convenient for many reasons: from staffing and protecting workloads to having independent operational models for new business. It is also a useful way of demonstrating the savings and efficiencies brought through Omnibus solutions.

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